

REMARKS

This Amendment is being filed in response to the Office Action mailed March 9, 2011, which has been reviewed and carefully considered. Reconsideration and allowance of the present application in view of the amendments made above and the remarks to follow are respectfully requested.

Claims 1-19 are pending in the Application, where claims 1 and 7 are independent.

Applicants thank the Examiner for acknowledging the claim for priority and receipt of certified copies of all the priority documents. Applicants further thank the Examiner for acknowledging receipt and consideration of the Information Disclosure Statement filed on January 4, 2008.

By means of the present amendment, the current Abstract has been deleted and substituted with the enclosed New Abstract which better conforms to U.S. practice. Further, the specification has been amended for better conformance to U.S. practice.

By means of the present amendment, the claims have been amended for non-statutory reasons, such as for better form including changing "characterized in that" to "wherein", and deleting reference designations typically used in European practice that are known to not limit the scope of the claims. Such amendments to the claims were not made in order to address issues of patentability and Applicant respectfully reserves all rights under the Doctrine of Equivalents.

In the Office Action, the Examiner objected to claim 13 for a certain informality. In response, claim 13 has been amended to remove the noted informality. Accordingly, withdrawal of the objection to claim 13 is respectfully requested.

In the Office Action, claims 1, 4-5 and 10-11 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph. This rejection is traversed. However, in the interest of advancing prosecution, the claims have been amended for better conformance with 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph. It is respectfully submitted that this rejection of claims 1, 4-5 and 10-11 under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph is overcome. Accordingly, withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

In the Office Action, claims 1, 3-5, 7, 9-11 and 13-14 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) over U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2004/0032574 (Koster). Further, claims 2, 6, 8, 12 and 15 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Koster in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,949,076 (Ohtoshi). These rejections are respectfully traversed. It is respectfully submitted that the claims are patentable over Koster and Ohtoshi for at least the following reasons.

Koster is directed to a lithographic projection apparatus where a radiation source LA outputs a propagation beam towards an illumination system IL through a tube 13. The propagation beam includes a projection beam PB and a contaminant particle beam 11. As shown in FIG 4 and described in paragraph [0065]-[0067], a flow 15 of purge gas is provided to impede contaminant flow towards the illumination system IL. The purge gas 15

flows in the tube 13 in an opposite direction of the contaminant particle beam 11 and thus "effectively impedes the contaminants [11] travelling with the projection beam." (Koster, paragraph [0022], lines 8-9) In particular, "[t]he purge gas flow 15 intercepts and sweeps up the particles of contaminant particle beam 11 and carries them away from the illumination system IL." (Koster, paragraph [0067], lines 1-3) The purge gas may include a mixture of several gases provided from a common purge gas supply 14, as shown in FIG 4.

It is respectfully submitted that Koster does not disclose or suggest the present invention as recited in independent claim 1, and similarly recited in independent claim 7 which, amongst other patentable elements, recites (illustrative emphasis provided):

guiding a first gas at a first side of a particle trap arranged in a wall of a chamber between the radiation source and the particle trap; introducing a second gas into the chamber at a second side of the particle trap, wherein the first side is different from the second side.


Guiding a first gas and introducing a second gas at different sides of a particle trap are nowhere disclosed or suggested in Koster. Rather, the purge gases (which may be mixture of several gases) in Koster are introduced together from the same purge gas supply 14, and are guided in same direction 15. Ohtoshi cited to allegedly show other features and does not remedy the deficiencies in Koster.

Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that independent claims 1 and 7 be allowed. In addition, it is respectfully requested that claims 2-6 and 8-19 also be allowed at least based on their dependence from independent claims 1 and 7 as well as their individually patentable elements.

In addition, Applicants deny any statement, position or averment of the Examiner that is not specifically addressed by the foregoing argument and response. Any rejections and/or points of argument not addressed would appear to be moot in view of the presented remarks. However, the Applicants reserve the right to submit further arguments in support of the above stated position, should that become necessary. No arguments are waived and none of the Examiner's statements are conceded.

In view of the above, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is in condition for allowance, and a Notice of Allowance is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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